

Kiddies Sunshine Circle



DEAR KIDDIES.—THE MIRROR has been in the past of most interest to your mothers, aunts, sisters and the grown-up members of the family, but in order to make it more truly "the Home Journal of New Zealand" the Editor has promised to reserve one or two pages for the little ones, who really are most important people, aren't they?

We will call this section the "Kiddies' Pages" because kiddies is such a friendly and cheery word to use when we wish to refer to the bright young souls who are the life of every true home, and of whom a poet sings:

"In books, or work, or healthful play,

Let our first years be passed,
That we may give for every day
Some good account at last."

Therefore I am going to try and make these pages so interesting for you all by printing bright, instructive stories with pictures and sketches, which I hope will please you; also we will have riddles and competitions for our clever little readers to puzzle out and write to me about.

It is said by another poet:
"And he who gives a child a treat
Makes joy-bells ring in Heaven's street."

I want you all to help me to make our pages interesting and let our motto be: "Always merry and bright." Soon we will start competi-

titions which will give you all a chance of gaining prizes and becoming members of our "Sunshine Circle."

In the next number of THE MIRROR I shall tell you what the Editor is planning to make our winter evenings cheerful and give you interesting recreation. Meanwhile I want some of my little sisters and brothers to write me short letters of about one hundred words written in ink on one side of the paper only, to tell me how they like the idea of the "Kiddies' Pages," and what would make them most interesting to you. A useful little prize for the best letter received. Be sure to write your name and address clearly, and state your age (which on this occasion must not be more than 15 years).

Hoping you will all rally round the "Sunshine Circle" and help to make it a big success.

Best wishes to all my little friends, from your big sister,

"SUNSHINE."

Address: THE MIRROR, Customs Street East, Auckland.

In Sunny Ceylon

JOHN lives on a tea plantation in Ceylon. You would think from his Christian name that he is an English boy; but he is not, as you would guess at once from his family name if I told you it. But it is really so long and so hard to say that perhaps I had better not!

John is a Singhalese. His father is a *kangani*, or overseer, on a big tea estate among the hills in the middle of the island, and works for an English tea-planter.

It is beautiful up there among the hills, and not nearly so hot as in the plains along the coast. John lives in a land of eternal summer, and rarely puts on many clothes. Not far away the hills rise into mountains, and on one of them, called Adam's Peak, there is a wonderful temple, which John often visits.

On the hill slopes are the tea bushes, all neatly planted in long rows and all kept pruned down to

about four feet in height. Here and there are palms, or rows and rows of young rubber trees to give shelter to some of the tea bushes that need it.

Down below are the wide-roofed buildings of the factory where the tea is made ready for use; for a great deal has to be done to it after it has been picked from the bushes. And on a sheltered slope is the fine bungalow where the planter himself lives.

IN a little valley below runs a tiny stream along whose banks are the "coolie lines" where the labourers live who work on the estate. John's family live down there, but in a separate little white-walled hut thatched with dry brown palm leaves. His people are Singhalese, and of a different race altogether from the people who do most of the work on the plantation.



"Feeding Woolly Molly"

The tea pickers are Tamils, and come from Southern India. Some stay in Ceylon; but very many go back to India as soon as they have saved a little money, and buy a tiny bit of land for their own. I do not suppose they earn much more than a penny a day, if as much; but they have nothing to pay for house rent or for the doctor at any rate. Their food is very cheap, for rice is grown in the island; and the climate is so warm that clothing is not an expensive matter at all.

On this plantation the coolie line where the Tamils live is a long low

building of one storey, which is divided up into separate rooms, one to each family. It is not much, but they spend most of their lives in the open air; so it does not matter.



"Little Bright Eyes"

Each gang of coolies has its *kangani*, or overseer, who not only sees that they do their work properly, but when necessary speaks for them to the *dorai*, or master. The *kanganies* are often Tamils, who understand the workers better; but John's father knows Tamil and the Tamils, and does very well.

WORK begins shortly after day-break. The coolies are drawn up in two lines like soldiers on parade, but not so smart! They consist of two or three hundred men, women, and children, and are sent off in gangs—some to do this and others to do that. The men usually do the pruning, and the women and children the plucking. Men do the heavier work on the estate, too.

There is no winter in Ceylon, and the tea bushes put forth new shoots all the year round. But from time to time the planter must give bushes a rest, and it is then that the delicate work of pruning is done by the Tamil men, who are born gardeners. If you saw a field of newly pruned bushes you would think that they were all ruined; for they look just as if locusts or caterpillars had been at them—just bare stems and cut-back branches.

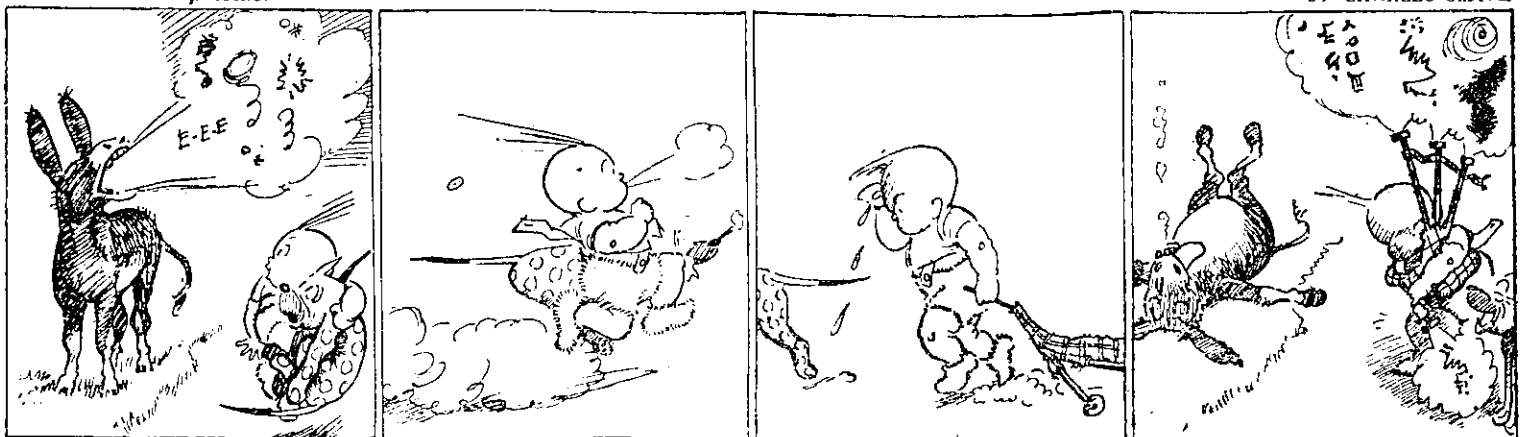
But in a month or two the pruned bushes are fresh and green again, so wonderful is the climate of Ceylon for making things grow.

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A bright specimen of the Native Race
Snapshot Competition

BILL.—Reprisals.



BY CHARLES GRAVE